

## SCHOOL OF NURSING REPORT VISNA CONFERENCE January 2022

Greetings! I am Dr. Lansiquot, Dean, School of Nursing at UVI!

On behalf of the Faculty, Staff, and Students of the School of Nursing (SON), it is an honor to present the School of Nursing Report to this august body of nursing professionals at this VISNA Convention.

In its 57<sup>th</sup> year of existence, the SON continued to be relevant and committed to developing the nursing workforce in the territory. The faculty and staff strived for excellence and were diligent in their effort to deliver an accredited BSN program. Evidence of this is the recognition by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) that awarded **“continuing accreditation”** to the BSN program through Fall 2027.

Since the last VISNA Convention in October 2019, the SON was faced with the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of which began in March 2020 and continues to this day. Notwithstanding this unprecedented challenge, the SON delivered on its mission to provide

*“...a learner-focused and multi-cultural environment, (that) prepares its graduates to meet all people's health needs”, focusing on “the US Virgin Islands and the wider Caribbean ...through rigorous academic standards, innovative teaching strategies, research, and community service.” (Revised October 23, 2020)*

During the period under review, the SON continued to be guided by its mission, the nursing workforce demands of the territory, and the recommendations put forth by the National Academy of Medicine (formerly the Institute of Medicine) Future of Nursing (2010). The school primarily focused on Recommendation #4: **“Increase the proportion of nurses with a baccalaureate degree to 80 percent by 2020”**.

**To support the territory to accomplish this goal, the SON:**

- a) Increased the number of BSN program graduates by **58%** in the three years 2019-2021 over the previous three years 2016-2018.

### **Enrollment in BSN Program 2013-2021**

<b>Years</b>	<b>OEK / STT</b>	<b>AAS / STX</b>	<b>3-Yr Total OEK+AAS</b>
AY 2020-2021	17	15	
AY 2019-2020	21	15	
AY 2018-2019	7	15	
<b>2019-2021</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>2016-2018</b>			<b>57</b>
<b>2013-2015</b>			<b>31</b>

- b) Increased the number of Associate Degree graduates completing the BSN Completion Program. Nine (9) ASN graduates completed the program between 2018 and 2020. These numbers are included in the numbers provided prior. The program has had no student enrolled since AY 2020-2021.
- c) Met or exceeded the national average (80%) for **NCLEX-RN Pass Rate** on the first sitting.

**NCLEX-RN Pass Rates on First Sitting Graduating Class 2018-2020.**

<b>Years</b>	<b>OEK / STT</b>	<b>AAS / STX</b>	<b>Combined</b>
AY 2020-21	8 / 8 - 100% 16 w/ 8 pending	3 / 6 – 50% 14 w/8 pending	Pending
AY 2019-2020	19/21 - 90%	13/13 - 100%	32/34 - <b>94%</b>
AY 2018-2019	6/6 - 100%	9/11 - 82%	15/17 - <b>88%</b>
AY 2017-2018	16/21 – 76%	7/7 – 100%	23/28 - <b>90%</b>

NCLEX-RN pass rates on the first sitting range from 88% -94%.

Eighteen (18) graduates of the class of 2021 have not yet taken the NCLEX-RN. This is concerning because the probability of passing the exam on the first sitting reduces with time.

- d) Improved **Program Complete Rates** since the revised BSN Curriculum (2016) was introduced.

Program Completion rates have steadily improved since the revised BSN curriculum (2016), and strategies to improve student success and retention were employed.

Completion rates improved from 48.5% for Entry Cohort 2016 to 77.55% for Entry Cohort 2018.

We anticipate a temporary decline in completion rates for Entry Cohorts 2019 and 2020 because several students withdrew from the program when UVI implemented the mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy in 2021.

**Completion Rates for Entry Cohorts 2016-2019**

<b>Entry Cohorts Spring</b>	<b>Completed in 5 Semesters 100%</b>	<b>Completed in 7 Semester 150%</b>
2019	63.3% (19/30)	Pending (2)
2018		77.5% (38/49)
2017		59 % (16/27)
2016		48.5% (17/35)

**Challenges and Opportunities**

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted and threatened the capacity of the SON to deliver the BSN Program. In March 2020, all theory courses were moved to online delivery, and the face-to-face clinical rotations at the hospitals were suspended. The school had to pivot its approach to delivering clinical instruction and use virtual simulation technology to allow the

senior students (Graduating Class of 2020) to complete their practicum courses using virtual simulation and self-paced revolving case studies. This accomplishment was made possible through the following supports and strategies:

- 1) Faculty and staff at the SON expended much effort to ensure that the program was delivered and students graduated on time. Students and faculty had a steep learning curve to adopt the new simulation and testing platforms effectively.
- 2) Students persevered and adapted to the changes in the delivery of the BSN Program, including learning new simulation products and the policies and procedures related to taking exams on the various remote proctoring platform.
- 3) The Virgin Islands Board of Nurse Licensure approved the school's request to offer up to 20% of the clinical courses using virtual simulation. This formal approval was necessary because the existing VIBNL Rules and Regulations (2007) are silent on using simulation in nursing education. However, the National Council of States Boards of Nursing (NCSBN) approved the use of simulation for  $\leq$  50% of the clinical hours required in a program. The simulation and learning resources used included Assessment Technologies Incorporated (ATI) and Shadow Health Digital Clinical Experiences (DCE). Below are the resources used for each cohort from March-May 2020.

**Simulation & Learning Technologies Uses March-May 2020**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Virtual Simulations Technology Products</b>	<b>Course</b>
<b>Seniors</b>	ATI Revolving Case Studies	Senior Practicum
<b>Juniors</b>	Shadow Health DCE	Pediatrics Nursing Maternal & Newborn Nur
<b>Sophomores</b>	Shadow Health DCE	Health Assessment

- 4) The faculty approved deferring delivery of the face-to-face clinical experiences for the junior and sophomore students. These courses resumed in the first part of the Fall Semester, 2020. This action was necessary for the sophomore students who completed the clinical skills component of the NUR 208 Fundamental of Nursing course (by March 2020) but had not started the face-to-face clinical experiences at the hospital or skills nursing care facility.
- 5) The SON was fortunate to have established contingency plans to sustain its capacity to deliver the program after a natural disaster. This policy, developed after Hurricanes Irma and Maria, guided the faculty to continue the courses without interruption.
- 6) Faculty members were already trained for online teaching required to complete the UVI Online Teaching Certificate before the pandemic. This was part of the contingency plan mentioned prior (#5). Further, UVI Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) provided additional training support for the faculty.

- 7) Funding received for the AAS BSN Program was used to purchase individual licenses for the simulation products needed for students to complete the courses in Spring 2020. Subsequently, funds received from private donors were used to purchase the licenses used in the 2020-21 and 2021-2022 academic years.
- 8) CARES funding was used to purchase a supply of Personal Protective Equipment (N95 masks) for the staff and students.
- 9) Private donors also gave face shields and respiratory masks for use by students and faculty

The SON takes this opportunity to thank our donors for their support of the SON.

### **Revision of the BSN Program Curriculum**

In fall 2020, the SON launched a project to revise the BSN Curriculum (2016) in keeping with its policy to review the curriculum every five (5) years. This project was undertaken with the dean and a curriculum development expert providing technical support to the faculty to undertake this task. The completion of this project has been delayed due to workload pressures resulting from staffing shortages and increased demands on faculty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three years of evaluation data on student performance on NCLEX-RN, the ATI Proctored Assessment, and the ATI Comprehensive Predictor was also used to identify the strengths and gaps in the curriculum. Feedback from student evaluations of the courses was also used to inform the changes recommended.

Meanwhile, changes in the national direction of nursing education were published in 2020 and 2021. The National Academy of Medicine (NAM, 2020): *“Future of Nursing 2020-2030, Charting the path to achieve health equity;”* and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN, 2021) *“The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education,* provide guidelines that will guide the ongoing revision of the curriculum.

The action plan for implementation of the recommendations in the Future of Nursing 2020-2030 (NAM, 2020) includes a recommendation (#7) that requires **“Nursing education programs, including continuing education, and accreditors and the National Council of State Boards of Nursing should ensure that nurses are prepared to address social determinants of health and achieve health equity.”** The Essentials (AACN, 2021) also include a domain **related to “Information and Health Care Technologies.”** In keeping with these recommendations and the findings of evaluation data, the following new courses are being developed:

Health Promotion (to replace the Personal Life Skills)

Introduction of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities in Health Care

Health Informatics

Other changes include reorganization of the course sequence and changes in the credits allocated to selected courses. Work is ongoing, and this revision is expected to be completed in 2022, and the revised program launched in 2023.

## Global Learning Experiences

In keeping with the trust to **promote global learning** articulated in the UVI Strategic Plan “Greatness Through Innovation 2018-2023,” the SON engaged students in an international learning experience. In support of UVI strategic goal *III 7G to increase undergraduate student participation in research, study away, or summer programs by 10% per year above baseline*, the SON launched the first Study Abroad program for BSN students in recent history of the UVI SON.

In Summer 2021, five (5) BSN rising senior students completed a nine-day study abroad trip to Costa Rica, Central America. Two (2) faculty, one from each campus, accompanied the students. Students expressed satisfaction with the experience and recommended that the program continues. The faculty and administration plan to expand the program to offer BSN rising juniors and pre-nursing students opportunities to study abroad in Costa Rica in Summer 2022.

## Enrollment in the BSN Program

There are **112** BSN students enrolled at UVI this semester, with 67 at the OEK campus and 45 on the AAS campus. Enrollment in the program reduced in 2020 and 2022. Two factors contributed to this reduction in enrollment: a) the mandatory vaccination policy and b) fewer qualified applications received on the AAS campus. We expect registration to stabilize as the vaccination requirement becomes institutionalized.

### Enrollment: STT & AAS as of January 2022

Cohort	OEK-STT	AAS-STX	Totals	Changes in Total Enrollment from Spring 2021
<b>Sophomores (Class 2024)</b>	28 (22 in '21)	13 (24 in '21)	<b>41</b>	Reduced by <b>10%</b> (41/46)
<b>Juniors (Class 2023)</b>	19	18	<b>37</b>	Increased by <b>2%</b> (37/36)
<b>Seniors (Class 2022)</b>	20	14	<b>34</b>	No difference
<b>BSN Generic</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>112</b>	It was reduced by <b>3.5%</b> (112/116) primarily due to ineligibility related to the COVID vaccination policy and fewer qualified applications on the AAS campus.

## Strategic Goals for 2022-2027

- 1) Complete the revision of the generic BSN Program.
- 2) Develop a revised online RN-BSN Program.
- 3) Begin developing an MSN Program depending on funding availability to begin and sustain the program.
- 4) Update the high-fidelity simulators on both campuses.
- 5) Work on infrastructure projects as appropriate.
- 6) Prepare for the next ACEN Self Study Visit.

**The Strengths of the SON include:**

- A core team of qualified and committed nursing faculty. Five (5) FT faculty members, or 55.5%, are doctoral prepared; and four (4) hold MSN degrees. The faculty is supported by ten (10) part-time faculty, 40% of whom are master's trained.
- Dedicated administrative staff committed to the success of the program.
- A current and relevant BSN Program Curriculum accredited by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN).
- Many nursing students (235) enrolled at UVI, eliminating the need to recruit students outside the territory. Of these, 123 are pre-nursing students.
- Support the VIBNL, Department of Health, and other public and private health care delivery agencies that support the delivery of the BSN Program.
- The support of the university and political directorates to provide funding and operational support.
- Finally, but importantly, donors who value the contribution made by the SON to promote the health of citizens in the VI.

**The Challenges Faced by the SON include:**

- The VIBNL Rules and Regulations (2007) sections related to nursing education need to be revised. These regulations need to consider new technologies (simulation) required to deliver the nursing program. Further, with a reduction in the territory's population by 18% since the last census and innovation in medical and surgical technologies, it is expected that the patient profile at the acute care facilities will change, thereby increasing the need for nursing education to use simulation to meet the core competencies of entry-level nursing programs.
- Recruitment of full-time and part-time faculty, particularly at the AAS campus, remain a challenge. Some factors contributing to these challenges include:
  - Socioeconomic issues, such as cost of living, housing, and employment opportunities for spouses
  - Recruits from the mainland often find public health and education systems unattractive
- Retention of faculty is impacted by socioeconomic factors personal issues, including changes in marital and family structures.

- Pre-nursing students present with inadequate academic readiness, particularly in the sciences. They are challenged by the volume of reading and the program's rigor, which impacts student retention and completion rates. Socioeconomic factors, as well as demands of work and family, also affect the students' success.
- Antiquated infrastructure on the AAS campus: The modular buildings that house the SON at the AAS campus is over 20 years old. The floor plans and spaces provided by existing infrastructure are insufficient to deliver a modern BSN program. The legislature recently committed to supporting the construction of a new school of nursing at AAS.
- The SON building at the OEK/STT campus is over 50 years old. The building was recently renovated. However, the floor plan at the lower level was not redesigned, leaving the clinical lab in its original location. This seriously impedes the ability of the SON to expand and repurpose the space to accommodate high-fidelity simulation activities on the OEK campus.

The faculty and staff of the SON view these challenges as opportunities and are committed to ensuring that nursing education is sustained in the territory. We welcome the support of our professional nursing colleagues to achieve this goal.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide the SON's Report at this convention.

SON: bal January 20, 2022